

Special Called Joint Meeting Randolph County Board of Commissioners & Randolph County Board of Education—December 9, 2004

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in a special called joint meeting with the Randolph County Board of Education on Thursday, December 9, 2004 at 4 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Davis, Kemp and Lanier were present. School Board members present were Paul Guthrie, Janet Johnson, Tommy McDonald, Laverne Williams, Becky Coltrane, Gary Cook, Grady Lawson, and outgoing Board member Barry Scott.

Chairman Harold Holmes called the meeting to order for the County.

Chairman Laverne Williams called the meeting to order for the Board of Education.

Chairman Holmes said that the Commissioners wanted to make sure that the County School Board is comfortable with their identified capital project needs and how they've been prioritized.

Discussion began about possible alternatives such as night school, the construction of a 9th grade school at Eastern Randolph High School and converting Randleman Middle School for Randleman High School's use and building another Randleman Middle school. The School Board assured the Commissioners that these issues had been considered and dismissed for various feasibility reasons.

There was considerable discussion about the immediate need to relieve the serious overcrowded conditions at Trinity High School. With the County School Board's current capital projects priority scheme, a favorable bond referendum vote next May would not do anything to alleviate Trinity High School's problems. Also, the current Archdale/Trinity Supplemental School Tax District makes it impossible to redraw school district lines in the Trinity area to include some of the Randleman High School students.

Although both boards agreed that there is a great need for relief at our county schools, the problem is how to pay for it. The County's borrowing capacity is limited; the County can borrow only about \$44 million dollars for school capital project purposes in the 2005 calendar year, with the earliest possible sale date for the Certificates of Participation (COPS) being January 2006. There was also discussion about whether to just proceed with a COPS deal immediately rather than waiting for the outcome of the May 2005 bond referendum.

County Manager Frank Willis said that if the bond referendum fails in May 2005, the County could still do a COPS deal, but the Local Government Commission likely would not approve a deal consisting of the same projects and funds that failed in the referendum; the projects and dollar amounts involved would need to be considerably less. Also, a sufficient amount of time would need to pass between the failed referendum and the application for a COPS deal—at least 6 months.

Commissioner Frye mentioned the possibility that the Asheboro City Schools and Randolph Community College capital requests, which are a part of the proposed bond referendum slated for May 2005, could be put on hold until more money is available, possibly through a statewide public school bond issue now being considered at the state level. These state funds may be available by 2007-2008. He said if these projects are put on hold, it might be possible to do a COPS deal to fund construction of the Northeast High School (\$27 million) and a second high school in Trinity (\$21 million). With the estimated cost of these projects totaling \$48 million (\$4 million more than the maximum of the

County's borrowing capacity of \$44 million for schools next year) some concessions would have to be made like not building all new athletics facilities at the new schools; some sharing of these facilities would have to be done temporarily. Another possibility might be to proceed only with the construction of the Northeast High School and wait to see if these state funds come through since it will be close to 2 years before construction of a Trinity high school could begin (land would have to be found and negotiated, architects would have to be hired and plans developed, etc.).

Superintendent Dr. Bob McRae asked that the Commissioners make a decision as soon as possible.

On motion of Kemp, seconded by Davis, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:00 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

Robert B. Davis

Phil Kemp

Arnold Lanier

Cheryl Ivey, Deputy Clerk to the Board